



"By the Blood of Our Alumni" : Norwich University Citizen Soldiers in the Army of the Potomac

Robert Poirier

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"Norwich University, the nation's oldest private military college, graduated hundreds of officers into the Federal armies who participated in the long and bloody war to crush the Southern Rebellion of 1861-1865. Robert Poirier's "By the Blood of Our Alumni": Norwich University Citizen Soldiers in the Army of the Potomac is their story.

It is difficult to overstate the school's influence on the war in the Eastern Theater. Norwich alumni were scattered throughout the army's hierarchy. In the Army of the Potomac alone, 1 graduate led a corps, 7 led divisions, 21 commanded brigades, and 38 stood at the heads of regiments. Scores more served in staff positions or in the ranks. These men—citizen-soldiers steeped in our country's finest traditions—were eyewitnesses to many of the war's watershed events. In addition to training thousands of volunteers in the art of war, these officers played a significant role in turning back General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Antietam; defeating Lee at Gettysburg; bleeding his army during the Overland Campaign and in Petersburg's trenches; and finally forcing his surrender at Appomattox. Norwich alumni served proudly in every battle of the Army of the Potomac.

Unfortunately, historians have largely overlooked the important role Norwich played in both preparing our nation for conflict and in winning the Civil War. Robert G. Poirier, a retired intelligence officer, Norwich alumnus, and combat veteran, has spent years researching and writing "By the Blood of Our Alumni." His book narrates the course of the war in the Eastern Theater by chronicling the experiences of these soldiers. Wherever possible, Poirier allows the veterans to speak for themselves, weaving their recollections and observations into a seamless history that will please everyone from the hardcore academic to the general reader.

"By the Blood of our Alumni" restores this venerable institution to its proper place in American military history."

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